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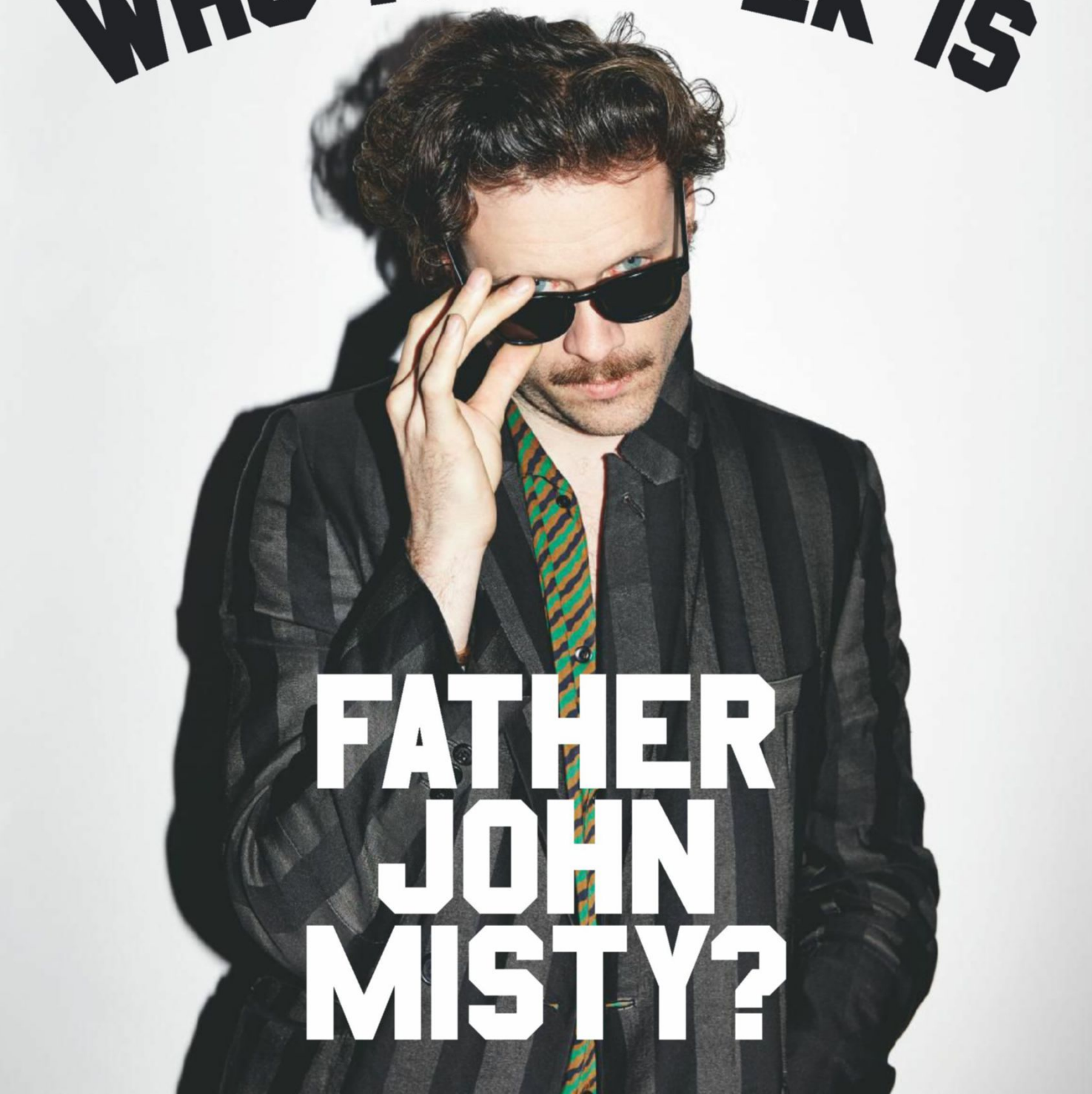

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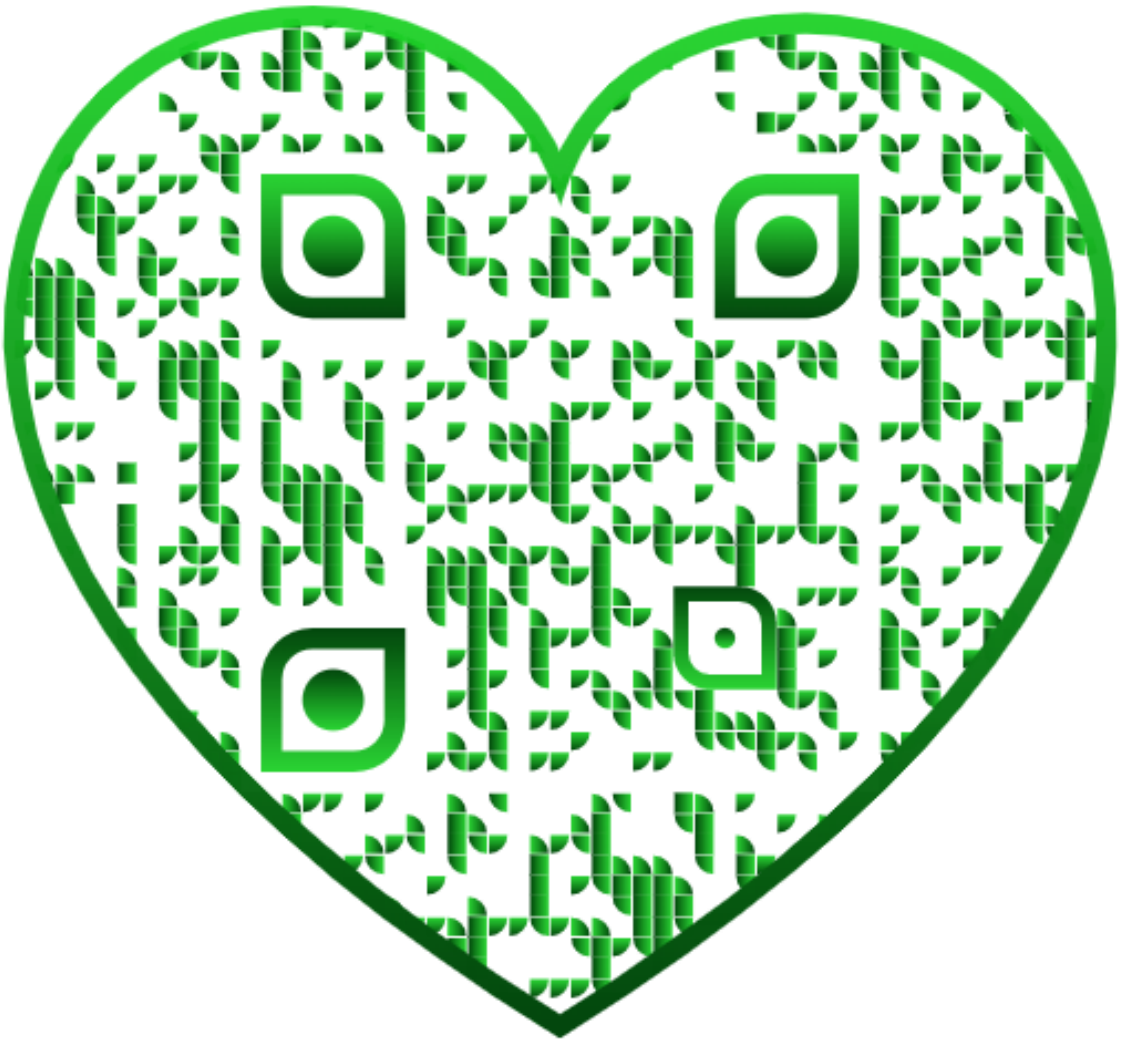

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NME

Hello...

IT'S EASTER weekend, meaning most of us get four days off to deal with our chocolate hangovers. Hazy primary school memories tell me Easter is also about death and resurrection, which brings us to this week's cover star, Josh 'Father John Misty' Tillman.

Early tastes of the US singer-songwriter's new album 'Pure Comedy' suggested he was out to destroy his Russell Brand-meets-Jesus shamanic sex god alter-ego. Instead, he's delivered a record that reveals hidden depths to the character, in the process summing up our strange days of online outrage, political turmoil and social media bubbles like a 'woke' '70s Elton.

Barry Nicolson's cover feature sheds light on the man behind the music and also finds our Father wondering if he's stumbled on the meaning of life itself. If, after reading it, you can't decide whether Misty is a deity or a douchebag, then don't worry – he can't seem to make up his mind himself.

Elsewhere, Tinie Tempah's album is reviewed, Kasabian's Serge shakes a fist at modern technology, and Leonie Cooper contemplates the joys of Harry Styles' first outing since 1D went in five Ds. Have an oeuf-ully good weekend, one and all.

DAN STUBBS
Commissioning Editor

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The man of the hour takes us inside his inner monologue

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TEL 020 3148 + Ext

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AGENDA

WHAT EVERYONE'S TALKING ABOUT THIS WEEK

Vin Diesel as Dominic Toretto

Still speeding

The eighth *Fast & Furious* film, *The Fate Of The Furious*, is out now. Here's a primer for your weekend action movie fix

CHARLIZE THERON PLAYS A CYBER-SUPERVILLAIN CALLED CIPHER
Theron makes her *Fast & Furious* debut here as a sort of amped-up Edward Snowden figure. She blackmails Vin Diesel's petrolhead protagonist Dominic Toretto into betraying his team and executing her nefarious plans.

IT STARS HELEN BLOODY MIRREN
Two years ago, the Oscar-winner said it was her "great ambition" to join the *Fast & Furious* franchise – and now here she is, going Cockney as the mother of Jason Statham's rogue special forces assassin Deckard Shaw. Listen out for how she says 'Toretto'.

THERE'S A *GAME OF THRONES* CONTINGENT IN THE CAST
Nathalie Emmanuel (*GoT*'s royal interpreter Missandei) reprises her role as the 'hacktivist' Ramsey, and Kristofer Hivju (*Thrones*' red-headed wildling Tormund Giantsbane) joins the cast as Rhodes, one of Cipher's henchmen.

IT'S THE FIRST *F&F* SINCE 2006 NOT TO STAR PAUL WALKER
Walker died in a tragic accident midway through the filming of *Furious 7*. Vin Diesel has said that during the filming of *The Fate Of The Furious*, "There wasn't a second we made this movie – not a minute – that we weren't thinking about our brother Pablo."

IT'S THE FIRST IN A 'FINAL TRILOGY'
At least two more movies are in the works. They're due to be released every two years, like clockwork: *F&F 9* on April 19, 2019 and *F&F 10* on April 2, 2021. If it ain't broke, don't brake.

PHOTOS: UNIVERSAL PICTURES

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Lorde and Jack Antonoff

Jack of all trades

Former fun. guitarist Jack Antonoff – AKA Bleachers – also co-writes mega-hits for megastars, including Taylor Swift, Sia and Zayn. He tells us about his most recent sparring partner: Lorde

WORDS: LUKE MORGAN BRITTON.
PHOTOS: GETTY IMAGES, REX FEATURES

You've teamed up with Lorde a lot recently, both on her album and yours. What's she like to work with?
"Well, everybody differs because everybody has something they want to say and a different space they want to occupy. It all starts with me and them sitting in a room, just talking about ideas and what we love. So with Ella [Yelich-O'Connor, AKA Lorde], we both love pop songs that are interesting on the production side and also have a lot to do with break-ups, which can be devastating. Making 'Green Light', we thought: 'Let's not dumb anything down, let's make the pop music we love.'"

How is it different working with a big star compared to working alone on solo stuff?
"I have one goal. When I'm with someone else I'm not trying to write what I think a hit is. I'm trying to write something very special that wouldn't have happened if these two people were never together. I think to myself: 'How does 1 + 1 = a million?' When I'm making Bleachers albums, it's a very different thing. On [new single] 'Don't Take The Money' you can hear me rolling around on my chair in the studio, making this sound of being a mess and trying to hold it together, trying to make sense of it."

You make your music at the studio in the apartment you share with girlfriend Lena Dunham. What's it like to have two such creative people in the same house?
"We support each other and give each other space. With Lena's work, I look at it as a fan. I say if I like it or not. She's my actual audience too, a human being trying to connect with music on an emotional level."

Bleachers' pets

Five bangers co-written by Antonoff

FUN. FEAT JANELLE MONÁE
'We Are Young'
Antonoff's first hit became a staple of prom and freshers week singalongs.

TAYLOR SWIFT
'Out Of The Woods'
The first major sprinkle of Antonoff magic: defiant, dizzying and with a massively hypnotic chorus.

BLEACHERS & GRIMES
'Entropy'
Pairing Antonoff's John Hughes movie sensibilities with more delicate touches from Grimes' 'Art Angels'.

ZAYN/ TAYLOR SWIFT
'I Don't Wanna Live Forever'
A dark, dramatic smash perfect for the *Fifty Shades Darker* soundtrack.

LORDE
'Green Light'
A piano-fuelled track that's all you need to help you get ready for the weekend.

Last W33K IN NUMBERS

9
Record-breaking number of Olivier Awards won by JK Rowling's *Harry Potter And The Cursed Child*.

1.4m
Copies Ed Sheeran's '÷' has sold physically, digitally and in streaming units. Not divisive then.

21
The amount in pounds Shia LaBeouf's latest film *Man Down* took at the UK box office.

3
Number of new songs LCD Soundsystem debuted at their Brooklyn residency.

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GOOD WEEK

LIAM GALLAGHER
Announced his first UK solo show at August's Reading & Leeds Festival. AS YOU WERE.

TYE TRUJILLO
The 12-year-old son of Metallica bassist Robert Trujillo is to tour with Korn.

JON BON JOVI
Cut a Pittsburgh show short because bronchitis had him "singing like s**t".

TOM HIDDLESTON
He's "not tough enough" to play 007, producers reportedly say.

BAD WEEK

Five things that make Serge from Kasabian say "for crying out loud"

Because their new album is called 'For Crying Out Loud', yeah?

1 AIRPORTS
"That's number one. I just hate everything about them. I hate being told what to do, I hate being told to get in line, I hate metal detectors and I hate waiting about."

2 RUNNING OUT OF CEREAL
"That kills me. 'Cos kids wanting cereal in the morning is a big deal. You know when you pour the bag and it's just crumbs and the last little bit as well? It's the worst – you can't even eat it."

3 IN-APP PURCHASING
"When your kid, your beautiful little boy, is playing on the phone and he's playing a game, and then it clicks off because you've got to buy some s**t, that kills me. I don't understand – it's a free game, right? That annoys me. If it's £3, I paid £3, don't ask me any questions, let me play the game. So you spend half the time going, 'Buy this, buy that', you know what I'm saying? In fact, that's number one. That kills me more than anything. I've paid for whatever the game is, just leave me alone, stop trying to sell me s**t through the day. My kid's not allowed to play on my phone, by the way."

4 COMPUTERISED CHECKOUTS
"I can't fathom it, like… just employ somebody to do that. I don't want to be putting stuff through. I'm not capable of bagging at the best of times, so just pay someone to sit at a till, please. I can't deal with it. And then you're always asking for assistance, someone always has to click some button or put a credit card in. So yeah, that is a "for crying out loud". I'm sick of that."

5 THE ADVANCEMENT OF TECHNOLOGY
"We should stop where we are – we don't need any more. We don't need nanobots, you know, we don't need any kind of… I think, like, a satnav on a phone is as far as it gets. So please, stop where we are. No more technology, thank you."

'For Crying Out Loud' is out on May 5

PHOTOS: PHIL KNOTT, GETTY IMAGES, REX FEATURES

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ON THE RECORD

BIG OPINIONS. NO FILTER.

WITH LEONIE COOPER

THIS WEEK

Harry Styles has somehow made dad-rock classy – bravo

Harry Styles, the people's pop star

HARRY STYLES WAS always the *one* in One Direction, wasn't he? The one who looked like he had more to give the world than just synchronised dance moves, interesting haircuts and gossip-mag-worthy liaisons with other singers who also have interesting haircuts. Harry's the one you want to go to the pub with. The one you want to talk about your feelings with. The one you want to stand with in front of tatty segments of old gothic churches at the Victoria & Albert Museum and discuss spirituality and our place in the universe. In a world full of chic pop stars who look like they might have bullied you at school, Harry's the one who seems like he'd have been everyone's mate.

It was with great eagerness, then, that I awaited the debut solo song to come from the lips of this pop prince among men. Zayn Malik might have been the first One Directioner to break away from the band, but it was Harry's single that I was way more interested in hearing. Rumours of his 'rock 'n' roll' sound have been circulating for months, with such legendary names as David Bowie and Queen being uttered alongside the tousled 23-year-old's. So, does 'Sign Of The Times' match the hype? Is this a tune befitting the former boy-bander's affable, actually-not-a-d**k public persona?

Well, if you were expecting pansexual space pop or stadium-straddling face-melters, then Harry's not quite there yet. But that's no bad thing. The tune is more Robbie Williams meets Rod Stewart, but damn, name two more successful British male chart pop stars and I'll eat my original cassette single copy of 'Angels'.

There are shades of other artists usually found on *Top Gear* compilations owned by your four-times-married uncle here too – a Marks & Spencer's leather jacket-wearing mélange of Paul Weller, Oasis, Elton John and Stereophonics. Even so, our soft spot for Harry remains. It's a rousing tune. A put-your-lighters-in-the-air tune. A 'Seriously guys, can you even remember the names of the other guys in One Direction?' tune. If this is just the starting point, then we can't wait to hear where Harry goes next.

But even if he goes the full Clarkson, which we seriously doubt, we're not joking about hitting up some museums and having a few deep and meaningful chats. Call us, maybe, Harry – the National Gallery is delightful this time of year. ***@leoniemaycooper***

"Harry is the one you want to go to the pub with"

PHOTO: GETTY IMAGES

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THINGS WE LIKE

THIS WEEK'S OBJECTS OF DESIRE

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Technics' legendary SL-1210GR turntables are back in production. Praise be.
£1299 *technics.com*

Egg-cellent
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blackheartcreatives.com

Pastel pumps
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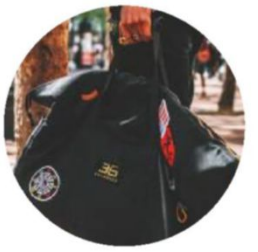
£55 *converse.com*



Wu wear
Only 25 of these Wu-Tang Clan bags have been made by RZA's line.
£160 *36chambers.com*

LA Women
Photographer Moshe Brakha's book looks at the groupies and icons of '70s and '80s LA.
£25 *amazon.co.uk*

Throwing shade
Ray-Ban Reloaded has resurrected its classic Meteor style.
£188 *ray-ban.co.uk*

Flying Solo
Celebrate 40 years of *Star Wars* with this shirt.
2 for £20 or £12.99 each
hmv.com in-store and online

Hats off
You can't go wrong with a classic cap – especially in bright pink.
£9.95 *nmemerch.com*

Top quality
Check these neat screen-printed tees from London label 100 Hail Marys.
£28 *100hailmarys.com*

Booty call
These hardy leather boots are perfect for trekking across festival fields.
£299 *redwinglondon.com*

Smells like...
Jusbox's Black Powder perfume has bottled the teen spirit of Kurt Cobain.
£130 *selfridges.com*

Amped up
Marshall's new Bluetooth headphones sound – and look – great.
£209 *marshallheadphones.com*

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YOUR TOWN. YOUR MUSIC. YOUR STYLE

What's ON your Headphones?

THIS WEEK

Sutton

‹ NATHAN LAVIN

19, supermarket worker

Listening to:
ED SHEERAN
Let It Out
"He uses his soul to sing."

Wearing: John Lewis coat, Primark shirt and trousers, M&S shoes.
Best thing about Sutton: "It's easy to get to."

HANNAH TODD ›

24, advertising

Listening to:
LORDE
Green Light
"It's so catchy. I loved it from the first time I heard it."

Wearing: Levi's denim jacket, UNIQLO jacket, Urban Outfitters shirt, Primark jeans.
Best thing about Sutton: "It's a great place to eat and drink."

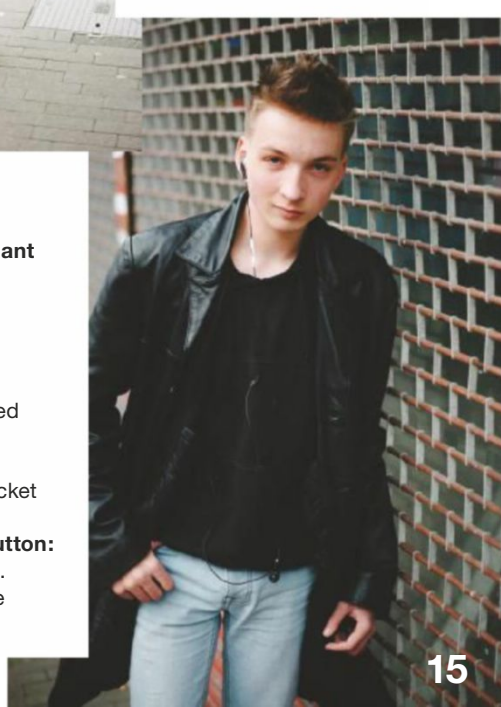
‹ RACHELLE HARRY

27, journalist

Listening to:
THE CHAINSMOKERS
Paris
"I find it really relaxing and the lyrics are ace as well."

Wearing: Topshop jacket, Primark jumper, vest top and leggings, hat from a charity shop.
Best thing about Sutton: "It's got a really great community feel."

PHOTOS: PHOEBE FOX



JOSHUA SELLNOW ›

18, car wash assistant

Listening to:
AC/DC
Highway To Hell
"I grew up with their music. AC/DC defined my childhood."

Wearing: Vintage jacket and jeans.
Best thing about Sutton: "It's a beautiful town. The old buildings are very striking."

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PHOTOGRAPHY: ZOE MCCONNELL

Father John Misty's last album made him a sex symbol, folk-rock superstar and collaborator with pop's A-list. It also made him a totem of everything he hates. As he releases new album 'Pure Comedy', Barry Nicolson meets a man contemplating life, religion, power and whether he's a "pretentious douchebag"

FATHER JOHN MISTY wants you to know that he doesn't know it all. The singer-songwriter, real name Josh Tillman, may be all things to all people – hirsute hipster-folk shaman, unlikely sex symbol, incorrigible bulls**t artist – but nobody ever mistook him for a sage. Sure, he's just written an album about the absurdity of the human condition, and at one point during our interview will even wonder aloud if he's stumbled upon the meaning of life itself (see later), but his epiphanies invariably come with disclaimers of self-doubt.

Case in point: the response to 'Pure Comedy', Tillman's third album under his alias of Father John Misty. Its 13 songs are a caustic, soulful and hilarious howl of existential exasperation, but according to Tillman, the general consensus thus far, at the time of our interview pre-release, is that they're "preachy, tuneless, self-indulgent and depressing. I think most people aren't able to see beyond this idea that's cultivated around me, that everything I do is disingenuous or insincere. They see me as a charlatan, and that disdain is probably what's going to ruin this record, which is too bad because it's actually very sincere. The phrase I see most often is 'pretentious douchebag'. You can put that one on my tombstone."

This is a favourite rhetorical tic of Tillman's. Ask him a question and he'll preface his answer with statements like, "This won't look good in print..." or, "This will sound insufferably grandiose..." before concluding with the fait accompli of his artistic failure, or mocking himself as "an elitist blowhard who thinks he's too good for a Chipotle commercial" (a credo which caused him to turn down $250,000 of the restaurant chain's "burrito money" last year). In between, he might make insightful, well-argued observations on everything from the Syrian refugee crisis to the co-opting of folk music by the advertising industry, but by the time he stops talking, you can bet he'll have found a new way to call himself an a**hole. "I'm a dramatic, depressive person," he tells me. "I've engineered my life so that my only value in this world is in my writing, which is really dangerous, because if it's a failure, then my life is meaningless."

The last Father John Misty album far exceeded Tillman's own modest definition of success, so perhaps it makes sense that he's become obsessed with failure. Released in 2015, 'I Love You, Honeybear' was a saucy, self-excoriating look at his romantic transgressions and white male ennui, whose humour and candour found a larger audience than the eight bloodless folk albums he'd previously recorded under his real name. Suddenly, Tillman was no longer "the guy who used to drum in Fleet Foxes" but an enigmatic folk-rock superstar who collaborated with Lady Gaga, cavorted with models in a Lana Del Rey video and even scored a writing credit on Beyoncé's 'Hold Up'.

Yet, while Father John Misty's songs came from a place of ruthless honesty, everything else about him was viewed through the prism of irony. Onstage, he was arch and sardonic; away from it, he earned a reputation as a first-rate troll by, among other things, covering Taylor Swift in the style of Lou Reed (purely to bait alt-country star Ryan Adams, who recorded his own take on Swift's '1989'), launching a fake streaming service (which only contained muzak versions of his own songs) and 'confessing' to the theft of a quartz healing crystal from an LA juice bar (don't ask). Tillman undoubtedly had a lot of fun along the way, but as he points out, "the last album cycle started with me on *David Letterman*, in a suit with a fresh haircut, yukking it up in front of a player piano. It ends with me bedraggled and f**ked-up onstage at a festival, screaming about entertainment..."

"I set out to be a real human. Now I'm a cartoon character"

The incident he's referring to occurred last summer at New Jersey's XPoNential Music Festival, when Tillman, disturbed by Donald Trump's speech at the Republican National Convention, used his set to deliver a lecture to the crowd ("the most incoherent thing I've ever said") about Trump's "clichéd evil" and the role of the entertainment industry in making his rise possible. As he concluded that day, "You may be bummed that homeless Chris Isaak is up here in a half-unbuttoned shirt telling you that entertainment is stupid, but it may be the only thing that sticks out about the hickory-smoked f**king abortion that this culture is."

Tillman calls Trump, "the perfect symbol of the failure of our culture", but as an entertainer, he also considers himself part of the problem. "People used to see things that disgusted them and say, 'I never want to see that again.' Now we've reached the point where we see things that are disturbing and revolting to us, but we want to see more and more of it. The scary thing is that a lot of liberals are waking up every morning thinking, 'I can't wait to see

De-Misty-fication

REAL NAME: Joshua Michael Tillman
AGE: 35
FROM: Rockville, Maryland
EARLY WORK: Recorded eight, largely overlooked, albums under the moniker of J. Tillman before finding commercial success as the drummer in hit folkies Fleet Foxes. Released 'Fear Fun', his first album as Father John Misty, on SubPop in 2012.
MOST NOTORIOUS MOMENT: The creation myth of Father John Misty – Tillman came up with his alter-ego while sitting naked in a tree overlooking the Pacific, tripping balls on psychoactive drug ayahuasca.
BEST TRACK: 'Chateau Lobby #4 (In C For Two Virgins)'

what horrible thing Trump's done now.'"

Trump's victory affected Tillman in unexpected ways: for one thing, he shaved off his beard the day after the election ("People will roll their eyes at that, but I just felt crazy") and now claims he'll never play his signature tune 'Bored In The USA' again, citing its "ineffectual liberal platitudes" as something he can no longer stand behind. Yet, while nothing on 'Pure Comedy' would have been invalidated by a different outcome last November, he does question whether his history of douchebaggery makes him the wrong vessel for its message.

"When this record comes out," he declares, "all anybody is going to care about is the Taylor Swift line." The line in question – "*Bedding Taylor Swift every night inside the Oculus Rift*" – appears on 'Total Entertainment Forever', a song that wonders where our growing addiction to entertainment may eventually lead us. The answer plays out like an episode of 'Black Mirror', as the human race becomes permanently plugged into what Tillman describes as "a narcotic state of total entertainment, where we're never bored and never have to feel despair again – and maybe that's the answer to the meaning of life."

All of which sounds suitably dystopian, and entirely plausible. But about that Taylor Swift lyric... "Oh, I tried to think of someone else who rhymed with 'Oculus Rift', but I just couldn't. I don't want that to happen to Taylor Swift, but look at the hope people once had for the internet as the tool of true democracy, and now we mostly just use it for pornography.

"If you don't think that one of the first things they're gonna do with VR is figure out a way for you to have sex with any famous person you want, you're kidding yourself. But I knew that line would sink the whole album, that people would get mad and call me a misogynist, because right below pornography, our second favourite form of entertainment is outrage."

Another new track, 'Leaving LA', is either a remarkable 13-minute portrait of the artist as a self-loathing middle-aged man or, as the song describes itself, "*some 10-verse, chorus-less diatribe*", that will horrify and alienate his fans. It imagines an encounter between Tillman and the Buddhist demon Mara, who ridicules him for being "another white guy in 2017 who takes himself so goddamn seriously". The moral of the story, he explains, "is that we all have to face the fear that we're delusional. When you write songs and put them into the world, you're vulnerable to criticism. The strange thing is, when I started doing this, I thought to myself, 'I'm not gonna be one of those white guys living in a white-guy romantic fantasy – I'm gonna take myself to task.' Fast-forward five years, and when people think of a clichéd, bearded, white-guy singer-songwriter, it's my name that comes up. I set out to be a real human, not a cartoon character, and now I am the cartoon character..."

Tillman was raised in an evangelical Christian household, and while he no longer believes in God, "I still talk to him a lot." Given the anxiety and confusion he feels about the state of the world, however, I can't help wondering if he misses the spiritual certitude of organised religion.

"No, because it was terrifying," he replies. "My whole childhood I was convinced that I was going to hell, and when the idea of demonic possession entered the scene, that really scared me." The closest Tillman comes to a religious experience these days is through songwriting. "When I first discovered that, I was like, 'Oh, so *this* is the feeling of transcendence everyone was talking about'.

"There's a song on the album called 'When The God Of Love Returns' that imagines this scenario when God comes back and we're all like, 'F**k you! You have no right to judge us, you made us this way!' In Genesis, God made the world because he was bored and lonely, and that's why we make things, too. We make things to be understood, which is why it's so tragic to make something and only become more misunderstood. If the music I make just pushes people further away, that's real failure."

There's more to connect with on 'Pure Comedy' than Tillman gives himself credit for – look beyond its black humour and penchant for apocalypse, and you'll find an album full of warmth, empathy and admiration, even, for our over-achieving "race of demented monkeys". Not for nothing does its final track, 'In 20 Years Or So', end on a note of reassurance, with Tillman singing over and over that, "*There's nothing to fear.*"

"You can look at that line and say, 'You idiot, look at the world! There's everything to fear!' But I don't think there's any virtue in fear: it's just a choice. You can choose to live in love, or choose to live in fear. That sounds naive, but I don't think the answers are as sophisticated as we wish they were." Being the "insufferable know-it-all" that he is, Tillman has one such answer he'd like to propose. In the 1,800-word essay he wrote accompanying the album, he posits a return to what he calls the 'Vedic cycle', where humanity goes back to its primal hunter-gatherer scene and every day that we manage not to get eaten by a bear constitutes progress. It's a hard sell, but he's sticking to his guns. "That essay is about the core irony that our boundless appetite for progress and entertainment and advancement are the same things that make us unhappy, that destroy the environment, that isolate us from one another. We take it for granted that we can walk down the street and not worry about a lion dismembering us, but if it gets a couple degrees hotter, we'll probably have no choice but to re-enter the natural order."

And how would he fare in that bear-eat-man natural order? "Me?" he laughs. "If I got sent out on a hunting expedition, the first thing I'd do would be to lay down in the rain with my mouth open and wait to drown. I'm too philosophical to survive." Now, there's an epitaph worthy of Josh Tillman's tombstone. NME

Father John's congregation

The big-name stars Father John has collaborated with

BEYONCÉ
What: ***Writing 'Hold Up' from 'Lemonade'***
"My involvement kind of ends with me sending off the demo," he later wrote. "It wasn't until she personally told me it had made the record that I really had anything concrete with which to convince my friends that I hadn't actually gone insane."

LANA DEL REY
What: ***Directing the video for 'Freak'***
The 10-minute film was apparently inspired by the story of Tillman dropping acid at a Taylor Swift show in Australia. He later told *NME* that working with Del Rey was "a dream" and that, "I'd do anything she told me to... I like being told what to do by a woman in that position."

LADY GAGA:
What: ***Playing drums and co-writing 'Sinner's Prayer' from 'Joanne'***
Father John has described the collaboration as "way more immersive than the Beyoncé thing. We were hanging. It was, like, five in the morning, someone handing me an acoustic guitar and I'm just like, 'What are hands?' We had so much fun."

GROOMING: JOHANNA DALEMO USING MAC COSMETICS

SENT FROM OUTER SPACE

(L-r:) Harry, Traxx, Benji, Dellux, DJ Comfort

Cardiff's Astroid Boys are the genre-mashing group fusing grime, punk and metal. They tell Jordan Bassett why they're the perfect band for our times

WEAVING around Cardiff train station on an old bike, dressed in leggings, a black hoodie and football boots "for the grip", 27-year-old Astroid Boys vocalist Benji Kendell cuts a faintly ridiculous figure. Since recording the filthy, furious grime-punk band's as-yet-untitled debut album, he's taken to cycling for hours in the Welsh countryside to try to stay out of trouble. It's what he plans to do later on today, straight after his lunchtime interview alongside 25-year-old bandmate Phil 'Traxx' Davies, who arrives in black turn-ups and a zip-up coat. The pair co-founded the five-piece band around a decade ago after meeting at a house party. "There's a video of us in this council flat," Kendell explains, settling in a sedate brew-house pub. "We're both taking it in turns on the mic and it's quite obvious that there's tension. But that tension grew into a bond. We both understand the work-rate that's needed."

It has to be said, that work-rate hasn't resulted in a breathless output to date: just two EPs, 'Bacon Dream' and 'CF10', both of which came out in 2015, have appeared so far. In part, this is because Kendell spent 16 months in prison for unlawful wounding in 2014. He was attacked by a group of men and stabbed an assailant in the neck with a broken bottle. "I was mad at myself because I'd hurt somebody," he recently told the BBC.

Kendell's jail time came when work was well underway on 'Bacon Dream', a record that combines grime beats, punk bile and towering, looping riffs that sound suspiciously like nu-metal. Traxx was left to finish and tour the EP without Kendell.

"I had the boys on the phone saying, 'Bro, it's looking good for you when you come out,'" Kendell explains. "I had purpose, I had something to look forward to, but for all I knew the buzz around 'Bacon Dream' could have ended naturally by the time I was released." He spent the time inside writing an autobiography and preparing to work on 'CF10', which was recorded upon his release.

His incarceration also caused difficulties on the 'CF10' UK tour. Kendell was electronically tagged, so the band played daytime shows and raced home in time for his 7pm curfew. "We played a sold-out show at [east London venue] The Old Blue Last,' Traxx says, "ran offstage and dived into the car. We were even gonna get a back-up motorbike if there was traffic."

Originally a grime duo, Astroid Boys became a group after a late-night performance at Glastonbury's Shangri-La. "After the show I had such euphoria," says Kendell. "It was like I was on serious drugs. [Traxx] said to me, 'Man, I can't wait to play this live.' He said he wanted to add drums and guitar and stuff. I was like, 'We're not a rock band, bro, we're rappers.'"

Kendell was a hip-hop fan ("Mos Def, Common, anything on Rawkus Records"), so Traxx introduced him to underground bands such as Bad Brains and Gorilla Biscuits. It was Traxx who recruited Richard 'DJ Comfort' Bancroft, drummer Harry Williams and producer Elliot 'Dellux' Brussalis to fill out the line-up.

"We're a very random mix of boys and that's important," says Kendell. "I'm a quarter Greek, a quarter Irish and half Jamaican. [Traxx] is Greek and white. We're relatable. Britain is balancing out multiculturally and everybody now has friends from multiple backgrounds and they're familiar with people who like all genres of music – it's not like when I was at school and it was just the chavs and the moshers. It's a melting pot and we're representative of that. We're the perfect mongrel."

The group's racial awareness is evident in 'Foreigners', the lead single from the forthcoming album. It features the rapper Sonny Double 1, who Kendell met in prison. The track throbs with muted beats and the chant *"We know that you don't like the foreigners"* and could be an anthem for a racially, culturally and politically divided post-Brexit Britain, though they insist it's not a protest song.

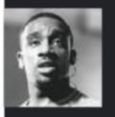
"It's not angry, it's not happy," says Traxx. "It's just awareness, 'cos the situation is what it is."

"[Racial tension] just isn't surprising any more," Kendell adds. "It's a bigger statement to feel detached from it."

"People only unify through hate," Traxx says. "They protest when they're angry. The only time people come together for anything other than hate is at festivals. So 'Foreigners' isn't about hate; it's about mutual understanding. You've gotta look at the people around you and say, 'We all cool? Good: everybody's on the same page. Let's make the best of a bad situation.' And then you keep extending that understanding."

Shout your town

Four more grime stars turning heads outside of London



BUGZY MALONE
Where? Manchester
Who? A 26-year-old talent who chose a life of grime over boxing. His eight-track 'Facing Time' release went to Number Six in the Official Albums Chart.
Best track: 'Watch Your Mouth'

SOPH ASPIN
Where? Blackpool
Who? Full of offensive playground insults, the MC's beef with fellow teen Little T even got Jme chatting. Blackpool's grime scene isn't shy of criticism, but people are talking.
Best track: 'Are You Mad'

SAFONE
Where? Birmingham
Who? The star of 2009-formed West Midlands crew StayFresh, he was picked out by P Money to appear on 2015 track 'Roll Up'.
Best track: 'Show Man About Grime'

MEZ
Where? Nottingham
Who? The winner of BBC 1Xtra's #NextInGrime title back in 2015, Mez is part of an exciting Midlands scene alongside Snowy, Kyeza and Eyez.
Best track: 'Sike'

"We're the perfect mongrel"

Grime is often compared to punk, a socially conscious genre that emerged from disenfranchised youth. Since the mainstream has embraced grime, though, Astroid Boys reckon it has lost a little edge. "Back in the day," says Traxx, "it was so f**king dangerous. It still has that, though not so much." Kendell adds: "We've been through gang problems, drugs, fighting, bad attitudes. If I hadn't found music, I would have been a bit of a muppet. But you can't do both. I don't think Skepta's sincere because he's rapping about things he ain't doing." Traxx is more forgiving: "He's changed – he ain't about that life any more."

It's debatable whether the most exciting genre in decades is really lacking edge. But it seems certain that Astroid Boys' debut album, due in summer, will inject new life into grime.

"It's a very, very woke album," says Traxx. "It's very conscious, but at the same time it's got flavours. We like to have a good time so some of the songs are just grime bangers that make you want to jump up and shout. But we're speaking a lot of truth too."

Traxx leaves after an hour, but Kendell stays for a mid-afternoon piss-up with *NME*. He explains that Traxx has an unusual level of drive and ambition: "People in Wales don't move as fast as he does." Traxx wants to leave Cardiff behind, while Kendell would be happy to stay, start a family and live a quieter life. He abandons the bike ride, but the next morning tweets, "Rode 35 miles today and I can barely feel my legs right now… champion!" The road's been bumpy, but Astroid Boys will go the distance in the end.

NME

PHOTOS: GETTY IMAGES

TOPMAN

ON TOUR WITH NME

What happens on tour stays on tour...

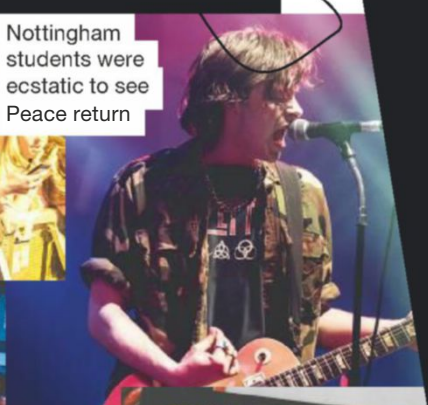
...apart from all the on-stage, backstage and behind-the scenes antics documented right here, from TOPMAN and NME's epic jaunt around the UK's finest university venues

Liverpool's Clean Cut Kid got up close and personal with the enthusiastic audience

MARCH 14

NOTTINGHAM TRENT UNIVERSITY

Nottingham students were ecstatic to see Peace return



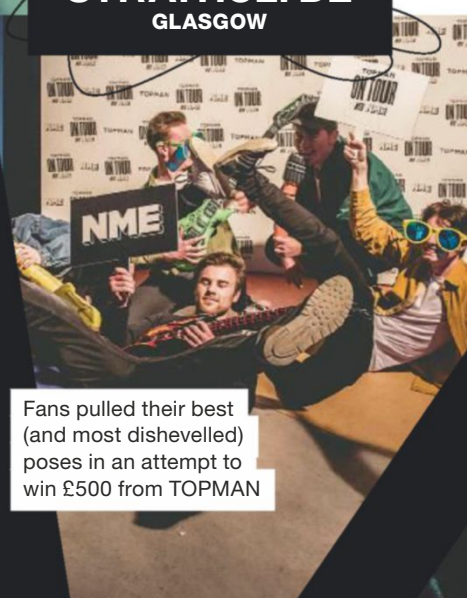
The Birmingham band were on top form as they played their first gig in 18 months

Lucky golden ticket winners got the VIP treatment throughout the tour

MARCH 17

UNIVERSITY OF STRATHCLYDE

GLASGOW



Fans pulled their best (and most dishevelled) poses in an attempt to win £500 from TOPMAN

Will Joseph Cook whipped out an acoustic guitar for a quick strum

MARCH 18

HULL UNIVERSITY

Singalongs and lots of uninhibited dancing accompanied Fickle Friends' stunning set

Fickle Friends brought the party on St Patrick's Day with their bouncy synthpop tunes

MARCH 22

LEEDS UNIVERSITY UNION

Locals Stealing were impressive on their live debut

Peace frontman Harry Koisser told the crowd he felt like he'd been reunited with 2,000 old friends

Will Joseph Cook continued to preview summery gems from debut album 'Sweet Dreamer'

Peace waved goodbye to the tour with another flawless performance

Liverpool's Paris Youth Foundation came with big hooks and moody stances in tow

MARCH 24

SHEFFIELD UNIVERSITY

Will Joseph Cook shone like the rising star he is

We have a winner!

WILL FISHER won our comp to review one of the TOPMAN ON TOUR WITH NME shows. Here's what he thought about Peace, Fickle Friends and Will Joseph Cook in Sheffield

THE FULL-ON RETURN OF Peace seems to be drawing nearer, as the Birmingham band conclude their three-date live comeback with a compelling set at The University Of Sheffield's Student Union as part of TOPMAN ON TOUR WITH NME. It's been two years since their last visit to the Steel City and 1,000 eager students flood the sold-out venue to witness the four-piece deliver a tsunami of indie anthems.

Sparking an electric atmosphere comes easy for promising pop maverick Will Joseph Cook, who delivers a lively performance of material from his upcoming debut 'Sweet Dreamer' to get the night underway. Unfazed by the heaving throng of bodies in front of them, sugar-sweet Brighton indie band Fickle Friends follow, in relaxed and chatty form. Frontwoman Natti Shiner even promises to join the crowd for Peace before diving into the tropical hit 'Swim'.

Opening with 'Higher Than The Sun', the blistering first track from their 2013 debut album 'In Love', Peace get straight to the business of getting the students into a mad frenzy. The band then rattle through singles 'Lost On Me', 'Money' and 'I'm A Girl' from their second album 'Happy People', all of which have the crowd generating mosh pits. As promised, Shiner can be seen jumping along with the students.

Remaining generally quiet between tracks, frontman Harry Koisser announces they'll be slowing it down a little for a song they haven't played for a while. The tender lilt of 'Float Forever' follows, but the calm interlude isn't sustained for long as the room erupts when the first few chords of 'Wraith' drop. Peace wrap up the night with 'World Pleasure' before blowing kisses (and any hope of new material being performed) goodbye. Fresh tunes may remain elusive, but their return brings Sheffield a lot of pleasure.

Fickle Friends made a lot of new mates

BBC Introducing's Abbie McCarthy and the very up-for-it Kent crowd

MARCH 28

UNIVERSITY OF KENT
CANTERBURY

Radio 1's Huw Stephens whipped the crowd into a frenzy

MARCH 29

GORILLA
MANCHESTER

Grime veteran Devlin received a hero's welcome as he joined the tour

Local trio SoShe added a touch of R&B class to proceedings

MARCH 30

O2 ACADEMY
NEWCASTLE

Kent's The Bay Rays joined Devlin in completing the night's bill

Indie, pop and grime had the students of Canterbury running for the dancefloor

MARCH 31

LOUGHBOROUGH UNIVERSITY

Fickle Friends gave one final stunning performance to the rowdy audience

Meanwhile, Devlin helped send the tour off with a bang, blasting out hits and new tracks to his captivated fans

PHOTOS: ANDY HUGHES

RADAR

THIS WEEK'S ESSENTIAL NEW RELEASES

Best NEW tracks

And when to drop them

BEST FOR MOSHING
ROYAL BLOOD
Lights Out
The boys are back in town. The Brighton blues/grunge duo take a hint from Queens Of The Stone Age on this beautiful beast.

BEST FOR BAD ROMANCE
HALSEY
Now Or Never
US popster Halsey goes all moody on this low-key electro-driven tale of star-crossed lovers.

FOR MORE NEW MUSIC, GO TO NME.COM

BEST FOR WOODLAND WALKS
FEIST
Century
Canadian folk pop's finest delivers this spry tune of two halves: the first is a bit Fleetwood Mac, the second is built on whispered wisdom from Jarvis Cocker.

BEST FOR BEING BADASS
BETH DITTO
Fire
Ahead of her debut solo album, The Gossip's powerhouse vocalist releases this funked-up demon disco treat.

BEST FOR FEELING WONKY
MOUNT KIMBIE
We Go Home Together
James Blake joins his pals Mount Kimbie on this wibbly, wobbly and quite ace dubstep-meets-soul tune.

BEST FOR KICKING OFF
AT THE DRIVE-IN
Hostage Stamps
Hot and heavy, this math-rocking onslaught will appeal to your angry side. Embrace it.

BEST FOR LIGHTERS IN THE AIR
BLEACHERS
Don't Take The Money
Lena Dunham's boyf and Lorde's producer Jack Antonoff makes like The Killers on this epic 1980s-style power-pop smash.

BEST FOR FRESH STARTS
HARRY STYLES
Sign Of The Times
A little bit Robbie Williams, a little bit Rod Stewart and a whole lot of emotions on Harry's huge-sounding debut solo single.

BEST FOR CUTE PICNICS
CHARLIE FINK
Firecracker
Noah And The Whale fans rejoice, for the band's former frontman is here to dish up pretty, pastoral and finger-picked loveliness once again.

BEST FOR MAXIMUM SWAG
BOSSMAN BIRDIE
Walk The Walk
With Skepta on production duties, north London's Bossman Birdie stakes his claim to being grime's next big breakthrough.

Best track

'YOUTH'
On an album that features 15 guests, the title track is Tinie on his own, and at his best.

Some killer, some filler

Current hits, future hits and some bits in between

TINIE TEMPAH
Youth
★★★☆☆
HIP-HOP | LOADSA GUESTS | POP

TINIE TEMPAH IS UK RAP'S nice guy done good. He's the charmer who grew up on a London estate, cut his teeth on pirate radio and struck gold with 'Pass Out'. His 2010 debut 'Disc-Overy' sold over a million copies. Patrick Okogwu's success has transported him to a new world: one where he can call Prince William a mate, add a personal tailor to his staff and buy a townhouse previously owned by designer Alexander McQueen, complete with a taxidermy zebra in his kitchen.

Tinie's earned life's finer things, and he loves them. His message: I came from very little; you can make it too. Yet, because of the pop world he inhabits, Tinie is always judged on the size of his last hit. His second album 'Demonstration' attempted something more cohesive, showcasing his evolution. Singles 'Trampoline' and 'Children Of The Sun' went Top 10 – but it didn't match 'Disc-Overy'. Now, after a series of delays, its follow-up 'Youth' is here, and it begins with Tinie giving himself a pep-talk on the title track: *"I've been coasting but the last few years have been weird / I'm either self-assured or I'm scared and it's how I deal with the fear."*

If album three starts off vulnerable, though, it soon turns defiant. 'Not For The Radio' is a double-bluff pop song pitched at his detractors, hooked around an MNEK chorus line that's, ironically, perfect for daytime playlists. At this early point, though, 'Youth' begins to zig-zag. The hits are present – his breezy Wizkid collaboration 'Mamacita', club smash 'Girls Like' featuring Zara Larsson and 'Text From Your Ex' with Tinashe. Plus 'Not Letting Go', the Number One he released in summer 2015, strangely tagged on the end as the album's final track. Then there's the ones he hopes will be future hits, the strongest of which is 'Lightwork'.

But all too often, tracks feel like connectors – carriages to transport listeners between the singles. There's little narrative, few definitive themes, but there are lots of guests. Some add bite, like Stefflon Don, Manchester MC Bugzy Malone and, oddly, Jake Bugg on the folky 'Find Me'. Tinie's story is a great inspiration, but a truly outstanding album still evades him. **Greg Cochrane**

PHOTO: BELLA HOWARD

Metal machine music

Complex electronica from one of the UK's most inventive artists

ACTRESS

AZD

★★★☆☆

ELECTRONICS GLITCHY ODD

DARREN JORDAN

Cunningham has been making boundary-pushing electronic music under the Actress name for well over a decade. His last album, 2014's 'Ghettoville', was a dark, glitchy and soulful triumph. 'AZD', his fifth, is no less imaginative, a record themed entirely around chrome. Concept albums are few and far between in 2017, but even rarer are the ones dealing with the shiny surfaces found in mid-range suburban wine bars. But then, the work of Actress is less music and more sound art. You won't be seeking out the complex digital symphony that is 'Faure In Chrome' the next time you hijack a house party aux cable at 2am, but you might want to let its crisp textures percolate through your brain as it scours away the nonsense of the day.

Repetition is one of Actress's core building blocks, with 'Blue Window' based around a hypnotic groove, while 'CYN' brings in one of the only vocals on this record, sampling the late graffiti artist and hip-hop pioneer Rammellzee over skittering beats and dreamy synth lines. It's like two different songs are happening at the same time, but it sounds magical. Big, beefier beats step in for 'X22RME', one of the few tunes that could sneak onto the dancefloor, but preferably in a seedy Berlin basement.

The more experimental side of the record is where things get really challenging. 'Dancing In The Smoke' is Actress's very own sonic Pollock, a six-minute soundscape that's part deep house meditation, part Burial B-sides. You might be more likely to find 'AZD' at the Tate Modern than in the charts, but that's part of why British music needs him**. Leonie Cooper**

LIKE THIS? TRY THIS!

APHEX TWIN

Richard D James Album (1996)

Aggressive beats and synthed-up strings come together on this landmark electronic album.

ALBUM OF THE WEEK

Breathing fire

Surprisingly effortless sexiness from the Swedish electro crew

LITTLE DRAGON
Season High
★★★★☆
ELECTRO MELODY SEXINESS

YOU COULD BE forgiven for expecting Little Dragon's fifth album to sound kind of strained. When the Swedish electro crew announced 'Season High', their follow-up to 2014's Grammy-nominated 'Nabuma Rubberband', they didn't exactly gush about the creative process. "We're four strong wills who find it really frustrating to compromise," singer Yukimi Nagano said. "We've gotten better at that, but it's still a real battle. It gets harder and harder for us to make records, but we still love it."

So it's a pleasant surprise to report that 'Season High' actually feels pretty effortless. Produced by the Gothenburg four-piece with Simian Mobile Disco's James Ford, this is a fresh and inventive electropop record with a healthy disregard for current chart trends. There are no painful attempts to incorporate tropical house, and when you expect a chorus, you always *get* a chorus – not a trendy, Major Lazer-style drop.

Fittingly for an album that contains a song called 'The Pop Life', Little Dragon really bring the hooks here. With its refrain of "*let love drip*", 'Celebrate' is a sexy blend of Prince and '80s Janet Jackson. 'Should I', a midtempo electro rush, comes off like a freaky Pet Shop Boys-Neneh Cherry mash-up. And the breathy dance-pop of 'Sweet' is so cute and catchy, it could almost be a more experimental Kylie Minogue hit.

In fact, Little Dragon only really falter when their songwriting loses its pop focus. The offbeat electronica of 'Butterflies' spreads its musical ideas a little too thin, while final track 'Gravity' meanders towards the end of its seven-minute runtime. Yet those self-indulgent moments don't kill the vibe.

This is an album that delivers both mood and melody, thanks in no small part to Nagano. Whether she's whispering "*it's your birthday*" suggestively on 'Celebrate', or asking a lover to "*roll another one for me*" on 'High', she's a compelling presence who really sells her band's sleek and sophisticated tunes.

Nick Levine

(L-r:) Erik, Håkan, Yukimi, Fredrik

FOR FANS OF

GORILLAZ JANET JACKSON

Diet Cig

New York duo subverting punk norms

LIKE THIS? TRY THIS!

PJ HARVEY
'Rid Of Me'
Harvey's second album saw her master the genre-bending combo of punk and indie in thrilling fashion.

Best track

'TUMMY ACHE'
Propelled by thumping drums and a set of ever-shifting crunching chords, it's as powerful as it is crucial.

FOR FANS OF

STRANGE BUT TRUE

After one of their shows, Luciano became pen pals with a nine-year-old aspiring musician and invited her band to feature in their video for 'Tummy Ache'.

NEW YORK punk duo Diet Cig – Alex Luciano (guitarist, singer) and Noah Bowman (drums) – are masters of getting straight to the point. Their 2015 EP 'Over Easy' had references to adolescent anxiety running throughout, and on 'Tummy Ache', from debut album 'Swear I'm Good At This', they deal with objectification and female erasure. We spoke to Luciano about what it means to be punk in 2017.

You've described your music as "radically soft" punk. What did you mean by that?
"Being soft can be just as punk and political as being aggressive, and we definitely have a lot of energy in what we do. We think it's OK to be empathetic and show your feelings and listen to other people's feelings."

Do you think you're helping people change their view about what 'punk' is?
"It doesn't make you any less punk or less strong – I actually think it makes you more punk. Caring about people at your shows is way more punk than just moshing and not thinking about anyone else. We realised you don't have to be really aggressive to be really punk. It's a thing we're trying to promote; listen to your friends and care about people."

When did you first realise you wanted to make music with a message?
"It wasn't until I was in college and getting involved in the DIY scene that I really started realising the importance of women in music. I was inspired by a lot of current musicians like Hop Along and Frankie Cosmos, just women who were using their music to talk about their feelings. I wanted so badly to just do the same thing and make people feel like they're not alone. When we were writing this record I was like, 'Oh my God, people are listening now, but what do I have to say?'"

What do you think of the assertion that punk will be better under Trump?
"It's a weird thing because you're saying, 'I'm so excited for the awful things happening because punk is going to be good.' I think privileged people would say that; a lot of people are scared for their lives right now, and they aren't thinking, 'Oh good, a catastrophe's happening but we're going to have good punk music.' And I also don't like people kind of crediting Trump for an amazing music revolution, because it's not him. We would have been making political music regardless." **Thea de Gallier**

DETAILS

From: New York
Social: *@dietcig*
Buy: 'Swear I'm Good At This' is out now

PHOTOS: SHERVIN LAINEZ

"Caring about people is way more punk than just moshing"

(L-r:) Noah Bowman and Alex Luciano

open air theatre scarborough

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Live

THIS WEEK'S BEST TICKETS AND GIGS

Let South Wales shake

Green Man Festival's line-up of homegrown protest music will feed your soul

PJ HARVEY MAKES prophetic protest music. "*Let England shake*," she sang on 2011's Mercury Prize-winning album of the same name. Six years on England is undeniably shook. Trust Harvey to speak more truth to power as she headlines the Brecon Beacons' 15th Green Man Festival.

The line-up's homegrown protesters don't end there: also playing hard-hitting sets will be London's bar-spitting poet Kate Tempest, Nottingham's acerbic electro-punks Sleaford Mods and South London's furious indie five-piece Shame, whose sneering ditty 'Visa Vulture' raises a crude middle finger at the Prime Minister.

Alongside PJ Harvey, the festival's headliners are synthpop dancers Future Islands and alt-country guru Ryan Adams. Elsewhere, look out for Michael Kiwanuka, Angel Olsen, Thee Oh Sees, Sunflower Bean, The Big Moon – and, of course, the festival's sweeping Brecon Beacons surroundings.

FESTIVAL

GREEN MAN FESTIVAL

August 17-20

Brecon Beacons, Powys

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LINE-UP HIGHLIGHTS: PJ Harvey, Future Islands, Kate Tempest, The Big Moon, Shame, Angel Olsen, Michael Kiwanuka, Sunflower Bean, Hinds, Julia Jacklin, Aldous Harding, Ryan Adams, Pumarosa

TICKETS: Adults £180, students £155

KATE NASH

Of 'Foundations' fame

AUGUST

Tue 1 Queen's Hall, Edinburgh **Thu 3** Church, Leeds **Fri 4** O2 Ritz, Manchester **Sat 5** Rock City, Nottingham **Sun 6** O2 Academy, Bristol **Tue 8** Concorde 2, Brighton **Thu 10** O2 Shepherd's Bush Empire, London

TELL ME MORE: The Londoner is taking the candid pop of her debut 'Made O Bricks' on tour for its 10th anniversary.
TICKETS: £18-£20.35

SIGRID
Rising Norwegian pop star

MAY
Mon 15 Deaf Institute, Manchester **Wed 17** Hoxton Square Bar & Kitchen, London

TELL ME MORE: The 20-year-old made an impossibly poised debut with her jaw-dropping February single 'Don't Kill My Vibe'.
TICKETS: £6-£7

GIGGS
King of road rap

APRIL
Sat 15 O2 Academy, Bristol **Sun 16** O2 Institute, Birmingham **Mon 17** O2 Ritz, Manchester **Tue 18** O2 ABC, Glasgow **Thu 20** UEA, Norwich

TELL ME MORE: The MC from Peckham recently featured heavily on Drake's playlist 'More Life'.
TICKETS: £15.50-£20

YOU ME AT SIX
Surrey rockers

APRIL
Fri 14 Motorpoint Arena, Cardiff **Sat 15** Alexandra Palace, London

TELL ME MORE: Touring fifth album 'Night People', the band say: "We're constantly trying to up the ante."
TICKETS: £33-£33.40

CONFIDENCE MAN
Mystery-shrouded indie-funk newcomers

MAY
Thu 18 Sticky Mike's Frog Bar, Brighton **Sun 21** Hoxton Bar and Kitchen, London **Wed 24** The Social, London **Thu 25** Sebright Arms, London

TELL ME MORE: This Brisbane supergroup have produced two stellar two singles to date: 'Boyfriend (Repeat)' and 'Bubblegum'.
TICKETS: Free-£11

THE LEMON TWIGS
Retro multi-instrumentalist brothers

NOVEMBER
Fri 10 O2 Ritz, Manchester **Sat 11** Leadmill, Sheffield **Sun 12** QMU, Glasgow **Tue 14** O2 Institute, Birmingham **Wed 15** O2 Forum Kentish Town, London

TELL ME MORE: These Long Islanders produced one of the debuts of 2016 with their Beach Boys-influenced 'Do Hollywood'.
TICKETS: £13.75-£15.95

CHARLI XCX

THE WEEK'S BEST GIGS

ANDERSON .PAAK
Sun 16 O2 Forum, London

BIG NARSTIE
Sun 16 Proud Camden, London

CAMERON AVERY
Fri 14 Brudenell Social Club, Leeds
Sat 15 Bleach, Brighton

CHARLI XCX
Thu 20 The Jazz Café, London

CHARLOTTE CHURCH
Fri 14 Oran Mor, Glasgow

CIGARETTES AFTER SEX
Mon 17 The Caves, Edinburgh
Tue 18 Gorilla, Manchester
Wed 19 Hare & Hounds, Birmingham
Thu 20 KOKO, London

CREEPER
Tue 18 Kingston College, Kingston Upon Thames

FACTORY FLOOR
Sat 15 Arts Centre, Norwich

GIRLI
Fri 14 Stereo, Glasgow

HAPPYNESS
Fri 14 The Cellar, Oxford
Tue 18 The Hope & Ruin, Brighton
Wed 19 The Louisiana, Bristol
Thu 20 Buyers Club, Liverpool

JAMPACKED
Sun 16 The Astoria, Portsmouth

KASABIAN
Sat 15 Newport Centre, Newport
Sun 16 Cliffs Pavilion, Southend-on-Sea
Tue 18, Wed 19 & Thu 20 O2 Forum, London

THE MENZINGERS
Tue 18 Talking Heads, Southampton
Wed 19 KOKO, London
Thu 20 Academy, Manchester

NADIA ROSE
Thu 20 Village Underground, London

NADINE SHAH
Tue 18 Omeara, London

NICK HAKIM
Wed 19 The Dome, London

((OHHMS))
Fri 14 Heebie Jeebies & EBGBS, Liverpool
Sat 15 Temple Of Boom, Leeds

THE ORIELLES
Fri 14 The Hope & Ruin, Brighton
Sat 15 The Joiners, Southampton
Wed 19 The Cookie, Leicester
Thu 20 Sunflower Lounge, Birmingham

PALACE
Tue 18 O2 Institute, Birmingham
Wed 19 Thekla, Bristol
Thu 20 Clwb Ifor Bach, Cardiff

PART CHIMP
Fri 14 Wharf Chambers, Leeds
Sat 15 Stereo, Glasgow
Thu 20 The Green Door Store, Brighton

PETER SILBERMAN
Tue 18 St John on Bethnal Green, London
Wed 19 Headrow House, Leeds
Thu 20 The Glad Café, Glasgow

PINS
Fri 14 Broadcast, Glasgow
Sat 15 Sneaky Pete's, Edinburgh
Sun 16 Beat Generator Live!, Dundee
Mon 17 The Cluny, Newcastle
Tue 18 Headrow House, Leeds
Wed 19 Moth Club, London
Thu 20 Esquires, Bedford

PLAITUM
Tue 18 The Shipping Forecast, Liverpool
Wed 19 Castle Hotel, Manchester
Thu 20 The Crofters Rights, Bristol

PUMAROSA
Mon 17 Hare & Hounds, Birmingham
Tue 18 SWG3, Glasgow
Wed 19 Soup Kitchen, Manchester
Thu 20 Oval Space, London

PWR BTTM
Sat 15 CCA, Glasgow
Sun 16 Exchange, Bristol
Mon 17 The Haunt, Brighton
Tue 18 The Garage, London

REJJIE SNOW
Wed 19 O2 ABC, Glasgow

RYLEY WALKER
Thu 20 Voodoo, Belfast

SPLASHH
Wed 19 Patterns, Brighton
Thu 20 Hare & Hounds, Birmingham

TODDLA T
Fri 14 Village Underground, London

TOM GRENNAN
Wed 19 Esquires, Bedford
Thu 20 Union Chapel, London

WEYES BLOOD
Fri 14 Soup Kitchen, Manchester

THE WYTCHES
Wed 19 Portland Arms, Cambridge
Thu 20 Ferret, Preston

PHOTO: GETTY IMAGES, REX FEATURES

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KYLIE MINOGUE

THE FIRST SONG I REMEMBER HEARING
DAVID BOWIE
Space Oddity
"My mum was a massive fan – she'd always have Bowie on the record player. I remember her singing this song when I was a toddler. Music was always around when I was a kid."

THE FIRST SONG I FELL IN LOVE WITH
THE CURE
A Forest
"When I was 14, I had a neighbour called Rebecca who was a goth. I was always going over to her house – she showed me how to do goth make-up and played a lot of great music, too. I was in her bedroom and she put on 'A Forest' and I thought, 'My God, who is this?'"

THE FIRST ALBUM I BOUGHT
MAZZY STAR
So Tonight That I Might See
"I went into HMV in Oldham with my pocket money and I knew nothing about them – it was just the purple album cover and the band name that I loved. I took a risk, but when I got home I just absolutely loved it."

THE FIRST GIG I WENT TO
KYLIE MINOGUE
Birmingham NEC
"This is so embarrassing. When I was six years old I was a very active, card-carrying member of the Kylie Minogue fanclub. I went with my older brother Tim, and I was on the first three rows. In my imagination she was looking at me and waving the entire time."

THE SONG THAT MAKES ME WANT TO SING
FLEETWOOD MAC
Dreams
"My dad was massively into music when I was growing up and in my dad's car Fleetwood Mac would be on. I've always loved a bit of Stevie Nicks – her voice is so incredible. All I want is to be friends with Stevie Nicks! I want her to read me bedtime stories and tell me about all the naughty things she got up to."

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THE SONG I DO AT KARAOKE
HEART
Crazy On You
"I absolutely love karaoke. There's a place near where I live in Nashville called Ms Kelli's where they do jelly shots of tequila. I sing 'Crazy On You' by Heart and 'All That She Wants' by Ace Of Base."

THE SONG I CAN NO LONGER LISTEN TO
NEW ORDER
Blue Monday
"I feel so bad saying this, but it just does my head in! I've heard it so many times up north – as a teenager it would be played at every pub and every party."

THE SONG I WANT PLAYED AT MY FUNERAL
PATTI SMITH
Wing
"Patti wrote it for her husband who passed away. It's such a poetic song about somebody who's no longer here. It's just really moving."

THE SONG I WISH I'D WRITTEN
LEONARD COHEN
Hallelujah
"It's one of the most beautiful songs ever written. Through that song you hear the beginning, middle and end of love. It's gorgeous. Leonard Cohen was such a poet."

LEONARD COHEN

Karen's album 'Double Roses' is out now

LAST WORD

The wisdom of the *NME* archives

THIS WEEK
COURTNEY LOVE
Hole
April 17, 1993

"If I read nasty things I've said, I always feel dirty. It's always so much nicer to say positive things."

PHOTOS: REX FEATURES